

# A Study of the Meditation Methods in the *DESM* and Other Early Chinese Texts

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## Introduction:

*The Discourse on the Essential Secrets of Meditation* (abbr.: *DESM*) 禪秘要法經 (T15, No. 603) is an oldest and interesting text dealing with various methods of meditation of the ancient Buddhist tradition. It is probably the earliest Indian text on the subject translated into Chinese, and as such important for the understanding of the development of *dhyāna* practices in Chinese Buddhism. It is our belief that the *DESM* has actually influenced the Tien Tai and early Chan School of China.

The value of this text lies in the fact that many of the meditation techniques and guidelines have hitherto never been exposed to the modern reader, and was composed long before these well-known texts such as the *Vimuttimaggā* and the *Visuddhimagga*, the information concerns early meditation methods. Here, we try to make a study on them to find out what the different are the Buddhist traditions in practicing meditations.

*The Discourse on the Essential Secrets of Meditation* (= *DESM*, T15 No. 613) is a valuable work of the early Yogācāras. It was composed by certain Indian or Central Asian master(s)<sup>1</sup> around the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. Its translation from Sanskrit into Chinese, influenced the development of the theory and practice of the existing traditions of Chinese Buddhist meditation, A slightly later *dhyāna sūtra* entitled *The Dhyāna-samādhi Sūtra*<sup>2</sup> which presupposes our text, developed a *dhyāna* system which greatly influenced two Chinese Buddhist schools, *Tien Tai* and *Chan*.

It appears that this work belongs to the *Dārśāntikas* who were combined being popular preachers and meditators. The *Dārśāntika* is historically a very important school. So far, there is very little concerning this school or movement known to us. Only a few modern scholars (mostly Japanese) have discussed its history and doctrines. We therefore believe that it is worth making an in-depth study of the *DESM*, preserved now only in Chinese from the source.

## 1. The subjects of meditation in the *DESM*

This work is primarily a discourse on various meditation methods and the types of experiences that the meditators may expect during meditation. Along with the instructions, there is also other practical advice for meditators, such as the choice of congenial environment and ways of restoring vitality if in the course of meditation training one is weakened.

There are altogether thirty specific methods of meditation mentioned and detailed one by one. For each more than one names is given, Of these thirty, the fourteenth is repeated three times, and the twenty-eighth appears to be missing. Apart from these thirty methods, there are also a few others such as the “Four *Apramāna*”, mentioned only by name. These meditation or contemplation methods fall into three major divisions.

The first division consists of eighteen meditation subjects (from No. 1 to No. 18) [T15. P.242c-255a]. These are suitable for those who are intelligent and knowledgeable, but careless

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<sup>1</sup> The catalogues speak of “the sages of the West”- “the West” while usually implying “India” in the mind of the ancient Chinese Buddhists, may also include Central Asia.

<sup>2</sup> 《坐禪三昧經》，T15. No. 614. P. 269ff.

(*pramāda*), arrogant (*mada*), and overwhelmed by sensual desire. Such persons have to learn and practice various aspects of the contemplation on the impurities of the body, on the dead person, on the nine stages of decay of a corpse, and on the white skeleton or bones. The eleventh object is to contemplate on the impurities. The twelfth to the seventeenth are further practices (with additional details) of contemplation on the impurities. These are explained in connection with meditation on the Four Great Elements, mindfulness of the body and soullessness (*nairatmya*). The eighteenth object further develops from the previous contemplations on the impurities. Also mentioned briefly is the contemplation on the Buddha and the fruit this practice brings.

The second division deals with only two meditation objects (No. 19 & No.20)[T15. P.255a-258b]. These are meant for those whose mind is distracted, (*viksipta, asamāhitam*), or those who have transgressed against the precepts (*adhyācāra*), or possess unwholesome *karma*. The nineteenth contemplation on the Buddha or *Buddha-anusmṛti* is regarded as the way of overcoming the unwholesome and can lead to mental calm and bliss. This practice is to concentrate on the Buddha's thirty-two characteristics (*lakṣanas*), on his four respect-inspiring forms of demeanor in walking, standing, sitting and lying (四威儀), on the Buddha preaching the *dharma*, and on the Buddha making the consecration (*abhisekara*). The Twentieth contemplation is that of counting the breath. This makes up a deficiency in the nineteenth contemplation. This counting of the breath is based upon the contemplation on the impurities; thus, it is the medicine for curing the diseases of lust and the distracted mind. Both these contemplations are said to be able to yield the fruit of arhatship.

The third division deals with nine meditation objects (No.21 to No.30) [T15. P.259c-263a]. These are said to be for those who are not intelligent, or who are arrogant and conceited, or who are heedless, or who have a distracted mind. The contemplation on the white bones discussed earlier is further developed [to a higher level of practice] with the help of the contemplation on the Four Great Elements. From No.21 to No.25, the white skeleton is the main object for the practitioner to contemplate. Within this context also discussed is the contemplation on each of the Four Great Elements. The meditation experiences of *ūsma-gata* and *Mūrdha*, two stages of progress in meditation, are also explained. The 21st contemplation is named *ūsmagata-dharma*. The 26th contemplation onwards includes the contemplations on the Four Great Elements explained according to the contemplation on the white bones; and then the steps and the procedure of the Four Stages as '*srotāpanna, sakṛdāgāmi, anāgāmin, arhat*, and the Four Fruitions (*catur-phala*), are explained accordingly.

### **Other subjects discussed in the DESM**

The *final* portion of the work begins with the last of the four occurrences of the phrase "Thus have I heard...". In this part, the following problem is discussed: In some cases, a practitioner, through the practice of various *dhutanga* and *dhyānas*, may attain *anāgamiship*. But he may be stuck and incapable of progressing towards the final goal of arahatship. The Buddha in discussing this problem, explains that such practitioners should practice the following meditations: The contemplation on loving-kindness (*maitri*) and compassion (*karuna*), on the Buddha's *dharmakāya*, on the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination (*Pratityasamutpāda*), on counting the breath, on the Four Great Elements, on emptiness (*sūnyatāsamādhi*), on the absence of characteristics (*ānimittasamādhi*), and on the absence of intention (*apranihita-samādhi*).

In its concluding part, several alternative titles of the text are enumerated. Also emphasized are the four practices which conduce to the four fruits. These are: (i) non-transgression of precepts, (ii) dwelling in quietude, and practicing *dhutangas*, (iii) doing such

labor as cleaning the *stūpa*, etc., by way of repentance of wrong-doing, (iv) constantly sitting in meditation.

The text points out that there are people who pretend to be meditators for the sake of gain. In reality they are heedless and dishonest within. Such people and their activities are strongly condemned. Those who are honest and pure meditators, are advised to keep their meditation practice and experiences secret, not letting others know. The text here also praises highly the merits gained by practicing the contemplation on impurities and on other methods of meditation.

Finally, the text mentions that, the Buddha had long passed away, and the faculties (*indriyas*) of living beings are now weaker than during his lifetime. Therefore, the number of practitioners who could achieve emancipation by practicing contemplation on impermanence, has progressively decreased. The period of this progressive decrease is given as from the first hundred years up to 1500 years after the Buddha's *parinirvāna*.

## 2. The structure of the DESM

The *DESM* comprises four parts. Each begins with “Thus have I heard”. This beginning phrase might indicate that the work was actually made up of four separate discourses united as one. These four parts are not just joined together there is a coherent continuity running from the first part to the fourth. The first part, beginning with “Thus have I heard”, deals with meditation objects from 1 to 18; the second part deals with objects 19 and 20; the third part deals with objects 21 to 30. In the last part, after all the 30 meditations are detailed, follows a discussion on other objects relevant in the meditator's life and the problems encountered in his progress towards arhatship (e. g. how to deal with the problem of being stuck in *anāgāmi*ship).

The first part (T15, P.242c-255a) is a teaching given to a bhikṣu named Mahakakilananda in Rajagrha at Karandavenuvana. He was intelligent, knowledgeable, but conceited, and heedless (*pramada*). As such, he was unable to achieve any *margasya-phalam* (道果). The Buddha explained his previous life and also taught him the way of fixing the mind for emancipation. Then, the Buddha taught Ananda how, in future, practitioners could correct their heedlessness, arrogance, and wrong way of life. For this, the Buddha taught 18 kinds of contemplation on the impurities. Here, it says that by correcting the wrong way of life, and following the contemplation on the impurities, one can be reborn in the Tusita Heaven to meet Maitreya, and attain arhatship.

The second part of the text (T15, p. 255a-258b) is a teaching given to a bhikṣu called Dhyānanandi on how to attain the arhatship. It was a discourse in Śravastī at Jetavana-anathapindasyavana. Here, a bhikṣu called Dhyānanandi who had already gained arhatship asked the Buddha as to how in future those who have accrued much unwholesome *karma*, can overcome this and purify themselves for the attainment of arhatship. For this, the Buddha taught Dhyānanandi and Ananda to give such people the contemplation on the Buddha (*Buddha-anusmṛti*) or on consecration (*abhisekara*), or on the Buddha's image (which is given in detail). Here, the Buddha taught that through the contemplation on the Buddha, the bhikṣus would be able to eradicate the defilements of craving and attachment. The contemplation on counting the breath and on the impurities are also taught. When the Buddha finished this discoursing Dhyānanandi and others who were listening, were greatly pleased. This second part of the text covers the 19th and 20th contemplation.

The third part of the text (T15, p.258b-263a) is a teaching given in a village called Tala in Śravastī. There, the Buddha taught a pupil of Kātyāyana called Panthaka who was dull-witted

(*mrdu*), heedless (*pramāda*), unable to understand even a verse for years. The Buddha told him his previous life. He then taught him the contemplation on the white human bones and the contemplation of *ūsma-gata* in order that he could attain arhatship. The Buddha went on to instruct Kātyāyana and Ananda to teach the contemplation on the impurities, on *ūsma-gata*, on *mūrdha*, and on the Fire Element, for the sake of those who are dull-witted, ignorant and conceited, for the attainment of *śrotāpatti-marga*. The Buddha went on to discourse on the attainment of *sakrdāgāmi-marga* through the contemplation on the Water Element, and the attainment of *anāgāmi*-ship through the contemplation on the Wind Element. The Buddha further spoke on the contemplation on the Fire Element for the attainment of arhatship. Thus, the Buddha taught in this third part, the contemplations from the 21st to the 30th.

The fourth part of the text (T15, p. 263a-269c) is, as in the case of the second part, given in Śrāvasti at Jetavana-anathapindasyavana. A pupil of Mahākāsyapa called Agnidatta who had gained *anāgāmi*-ship was unable to attain arhatship despite five years of practicing austerity. The Buddha explained that in the past life of Agnidatta he the Buddha had become a humble and patient prince. He then taught him the contemplation on *maitri*. Agnidatta immediately attained arhatship. The Buddha for the sake of beings in future discoursed on how to progress from *anāgāmi*-ship towards arhatship. The methods he taught are: the contemplation on the Buddhas (*Buddhanusmrti-samādhi*), on compassion (*maitri*), on the aspects of Dependent Origination (*pratitya-samutpāda*), on counting the breath (*ānāpāna-anusmrti*), on the Four Great Elements, and on emptiness (*sūnyatā-samādhi*). Finally, the Buddha told Ananda that successful meditators would be born in the Tusita Heaven, where they could meet Maitreya, and gain emancipation, as in the teaching in the first Part of this text.

From the above description, one can see the unified structure of four parts organized into a single text. In all thirty different meditation subjects are given as the methods for attaining the arhatship.

There is a hint in the text as regards the order of meditation subjects. The Buddha says: “If you want to become a meditator, first of all, you should practice the contemplation that Kakilananda followed. Then practice Dhyānanandi’s contemplation, and [then] Panthaka’s contemplation” (see the 21st contemplation, T15, p.259b).” This same hint on order again recurs elsewhere from the mouth of Ananda: “The Tathāgata first discoursed on the contemplation on impurities for Kakilananda. Then he taught the contemplation on counting breath to bhikṣu Dhyānanandi. Then he taught the contemplation on the Four Elements to bhikṣu Agnidatta. These various subtle teachings [of meditation] were taught by the Buddha. How should we hold them in mind? Under what titles should they be proclaimed in the future? He taught that this text should be called ‘*The Discourse on the Essential Secrets of Meditation, or The Ways of the Contemplation on the White Human Bones, or The Gradual Way of the Nine stages of Contemplation on a Corpse, or The methods of the Contemplation on Wandering Thoughts, or Ānāpāna Contemplation, or The Gradual Way of Contemplation Leading to the Attainment of the Four Fruits (catul-phala), or also The Distinguishing of the Meditation Experience.*’<sup>3</sup>

In this latter quotation can be seen, various alternative titles for the text. We could perhaps also look at the schematic structure of the whole text as follows: By starting each part with “Thus have I heard”, its editor intended to emphasize that the various meditation objects were transmitted by the Buddha himself (i.e. based on the *sūras* and *vinaya* texts) under different circumstances, and to people of different types and needs.

We could even say that this text is made of different discussions taken as a kind of notes

<sup>3</sup>. See the last fascicle, next to the contemplation on emptiness, T15, p.267c.

from the four *Āgamas* and elaborated with relevant material from the Dārstantika meditational tradition. All the four parts of this text are about sitting meditation. The author of the text united the four parts into one continuous text. Accordingly, we have the DESM in three fascicles. It is quite probable that the first three discourses constitute the original compilation, because the 30 kinds of meditation objects were put forth in these three parts systematically. The fourth discourse was added to the main text later on to yield the present form of the DESM. This seems to be the case at the time of the last revision of the work. For further discussion on its original structure and subsequent reorganization, see the section below on “The history of translation of the DESM”.

### 3. The history of the translation of the DESM

Our findings concerning the history of the compilation and translation of the *DESM* as follows:

(1) The DESM was composed by certain Indian or Central Asian master(s)<sup>4</sup> around the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. The period of its compilation can be inferred from the fact the first Chinese translation was made by Zhi Qian in the early part of the 3rd century A.D., A.D. and the second and third translation were made before 441 A. D.

(2) In the ‘Old Translation’ period (prior to the ‘New translation’ standards laid by Xuan Zang), the *EDSM* was highly respected, and regarded as an important meditation manual. It was translated three times within a period of two hundred years (A.D. 223-424). This also suggests that a group of Chinese people, both before and after Kumarajiva, were greatly interested in practicing meditation. We may say that we can judge the knowledge of the Chinese Buddhists on meditation; in that period of Chinese Buddhism, by the meditation methods prescribed in the DESM which contained the greatest number of meditation methods to date.

(3) The original of the DESM seems to be in Sanskrit. As such, it was more probably by an Indian rather than a Central Asian, since most of early Buddhist texts from Central Asia were in Prakrit or hybrid Sanskrit. With regard to its content, it should reflect some of the major trends of thoughts in Indian Buddhism around the 2nd or 3rd century. This reflection may be seen in the frequent discussion on emptiness (*sūnyatā*) - of the *skandhas*, and on *pratitya-samutpāda*. It was Nagarjuna of this period (around 3rd century A. D.) who rigorously developed the doctrine of *sūnyatā* on the basis of the Buddha’s teaching on *pratitya-samutpāda*. Subsequently, all Buddhist schools, in their doctrinal formulation, paid at least a lip service to the doctrine of *sūnyatā*. At the same time, the text also reflects-as it naturally should –the author’s own doctrinal attitude. This attitude is clearly seen to be one of being centred on the Buddha’s teaching in the early (non-Mahayana) *sūtras*. There is indeed nothing in the *DESM* - except possibly the stanza line apparently from the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā*<sup>5</sup> - which is characteristically Mahayanic

### 4. Stūpas and the way of repenting evil deeds in the DESM

As the historical Buddha no longer exists, his stūpa has been conceived to represent him. According to *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, people’s hearts can be made peaceful by seeing or at the thought of four kinds of stūpas. After death they will go to a good destination and re-arise in a heavenly world. The following is a quotation from the *sutta*.

<sup>4</sup>. The catalogues speak of “the sages of the West”- “the West” while usually implying “India” in the mind of the ancient Chinese Buddhists, may also include Central Asia.

<sup>5</sup>. However, this stanza line, even if actually derived from the *Vajracchedika*, has nothing characteristically Mahayanic. Indeed, the content of the whole of the *Vajracchedika* can easily be seen to accord well with the standpoint of early Buddhism as found in the *nikaya/agama*.

There are four persons worthy of a stūpa. Tathagata, Arhat, perfectly enlightened One is one, a Pacceka Buddha is one, a disciple of the Tathagata is one, and a wheel-turning monarch is one. And why is each of these worthy of a stūpa? Because, at the thought: “This is the stūpa of the Tathagata, of a Pacceka Buddha, of a disciple of the Tathagata, of a wheel-turning monarch,” people’s hearts are made peaceful, and then, at the breaking-up of the body after death they go to a good destiny and rearise in a heavenly world. That is the reason, and those are the four who are worthy of a stūpa.<sup>6</sup>

Stūpas were built over the relics of the Buddha and by the time of Asoka had become the predominant way of paying homage to the departed Master. Worshipping a stūpa, eventually as qualified faith, produces the thought of enlightenment. One who pays homage to a stūpa is said to become ever-fortunate, alert and set on the path of virtue leading to enlightenment.<sup>7</sup> This act of deep reverence would be accompanied by offerings of flowers, incense and perfume.<sup>8</sup> By fixing network coverings to *stūpas* he becomes able to escape the net of Māra and gain the supreme status of the Buddha.<sup>9</sup> Bodhisattvas are also instructed to pay homage to stūpas in all possible manners, such as removing withered flowers from those places, and offering fresh flowers, incense, and perfumes, etc. Any act of service in the name of the Buddha would certainly help them acquire enlightenment.

In brief, in the Mtu, the ritual obeisance and ceremonious homage paid to the Buddha’s relics and stūpas are emphasized as a sure path leading to heavenly abodes.<sup>10</sup> This counts to be another instance where the *DESM* harmonizes with the old Buddhist texts, which also stresses this type of worship as being conducive to the attainment of heaven.<sup>11</sup> The *Avalokita-sūtra* (ii. 257. 6ff) presents a detailed exposition of the efficacy of the worshipping of *stūpas*.

*Stūpas* in the *DESM* are important to meditators and ascetics, especially after the Buddha’s *nirvāna*. Because, the premier condition for any one to practice meditation is pure, without committing any evil both past and present. Many people have committed offences, and want to purify themselves here and now attain emancipation According to the *DESM*, to clean stupas and smear their ground is a effective way to overcome the meditators’ unwholesome deed done in the past. After this, the meditators can develop their *samādhi* to a higher level. For example, ‘If the meditator, under the rays and lights, sees each of the meditational experiences and spheres as impure and unclear (*vyamisralambanatve*), he should rise up to clean the *stūpas*, and smear their ground... They should practice various kind of repentance and confessions’ [T15.p.255c]. ‘If they hid and covered their sins they could see the lights as the color of a rotten wood. On seeing this they should realize that they had offended the precepts [in the past]. Then, they should feel shame, confess and blame themselves, and make themselves clean stūpas and smear their ground and do various kind of labor... [T15.p.257b]

“*The Sūtra on the Secret Importance of Curing the (Mental) Disease of Those Who Engage in Contemplation*<sup>12</sup>” also shows the way of saving the person who has committed an offence. In this text it is said if the meditator in practicing contemplations saw the Buddha in a

<sup>6</sup>. Taken from *Thus Have I Heard*, tr. by Maurice Walshe, p.264-265.

<sup>7</sup>. Mtu., ii, 390.14.

<sup>8</sup>. *ibid.*, ii.393. 5-394.23.

<sup>9</sup>. *ibid.*, ii. 391.3 ff.

<sup>10</sup>. Mtu., III.318. 14-15.

<sup>11</sup>. *ibid.*, iii 327. 10-12.

<sup>12</sup>. *Zhi-chan-bing-bi-yao-jing* 治禪病秘要經 was translated by Tsu-khu kin-shao, A.D. 455, of the earlier Sun dynasty, A.D. 420-479. 2 fascicili; see Taishao, vol. XV.p.333.

black color, or as the foot of a black elephant, or like an ashy person, these are the signs of having committed offences. He should take off his *sanghāti* (assembly robe), put on his *antarvasaka*, go to the pure place (e.g. the place of *stūpa*), or go to the wise. He should place his knees, elbows, and head on the ground, and confess his evil deeds with honest mind. He should carry out the duties of the *samgha*, do various kind of labor, and clean the toilets for 800 days. Then he should bathe his body, put on his *sanghāti*, and enter the *stūpa*, with one-pointedness of mind. Crossing his hands together he should contemplate on the lights emitting from the *urnā*<sup>13</sup> of the Buddha... The wise should advise him to clean the *stūpas*, smear the grounds, contemplate on the Buddha or the seven past Buddhas. When the practitioner sees the Buddha's golden body and lights he is suitable to be taught to contemplate on impurities.

The *Buddhadhyāna-samādhisagara-sūtra*<sup>14</sup> says that the contemplation on the *Buddha-samādhi* is the way to reduce or alleviate serious transgressions. Therefore, the contemplation on the Buddha's thirty-two characteristics or the Buddha's image is regarded as the medicine for offenders, as a shelter for those who had broken the precepts, as a guide to those who have lost their way, as a lamp for those who are in the dark.

From this, we see not only the Gospel, but also the significance of the *Stūpas* and the Buddha's image in the practice of meditation in the later Buddhism.

Early Buddhism taught various precepts based upon different human relationships, e.g. between parents and children, husband and wife, teacher and pupil, employer and employee, friend and comrade, religious preceptor and devotee, and so on. Those were finally systematized in the teaching for Sigal (*Sigalovada*), which has been regarded as the guiding principles for laity. Some of those aspects of teaching is given in the *DESM* in the form of offering to the needs of the teachers and parents in order to overcome the meditator's past evil deeds. It says that the meditator should make offerings to his teachers, elders and parents, regarding them as the Buddha and have great respect for them. In front of them, he should make the great vow and will, and have this saying: 'I now make those offerings to the teachers and parents. By these meritorious deeds, may I, throughout the ages and lives, obtain purification.' Having perfectly done the above, the meditator is able to see that the lights are clear and lovable as before.

## 5. The connection of the *DESM* with other *dhyāna sūtras* in the early (non-Mahāyana) Yogācāra

### Methods of meditation in the *dhyāna* texts

In the period of *Abhidharma* development of the northern traditions, there are the Dārśtānatikas some of whom were subsequently known as the (non-Mahāyana) yogācāra masters. These ācāyas seemed to be virtuous preachers and meditators. A good number of the meditational sūtras or texts which are preserved in China seem to have originated from them. There are at least seven such texts recognized as belonging to this tradition. They are:

(No.1) The *Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra*<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup>. The soft white hair that grows between the Buddha's eyebrows, is one of the Buddha's thirty-two characteristics.

<sup>14</sup>. *Taishao*, vol. XV, p.645. 觀佛三昧海經 Guan-fu-san-mei-hai-jing was translated by Buddhahadra, of the Eastern Tsin dynasty (A.D. 317-420), 10 fasciculi; 12 chapters. Deist in Tibetan.

<sup>15</sup>. The *Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra*, whose Sanskrit text has been lost, sets forth the stages of meditation for yonins. This is virtually an anthology of passages relevant to meditation composed by Samgharaksa, a well-known Yoga master, 700 years after the Buddha's *nirvāna*. The *Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra* (修行道地經) translated by Dharmaraksa into Chinese in A.D.284, first came into existence in the form of one volume of 7chapter, grew into a *sūtra* of 27 chapters and then the 28th chapter (第子三品修行品) and other chapters were added, to assume the present form of 7 volumes of 30 chapters in the Chinese version. The

- (No.2) The *DESM*<sup>16</sup>  
 (No.3) The *Dhyāna-samādhi Sūtra*<sup>17</sup>  
 (No.4) *An Epitome of Meditation*<sup>18</sup>  
 (No.5) *The Dharmatara-dhyāna-sūtra*<sup>19</sup>  
 (No.6) *Guan-fu-san-mei-hai-sūtra*<sup>20</sup>  
 (No.7) The Great Discourse of the *Buddha on Mindfulness of Ānāpāna*.<sup>21</sup>

We carefully examined the above mentioned meditation texts, and compared the methods of meditation contained therein with the forty subjects of *Kammatthana* in the *Visudhimagā*. We noticed that it was comparable to the latter in that the *DESM* is like an encyclopedia of the methods of meditation, which were existing in the Northern Tradition of Buddhism at the time of its compilation and translation. This is because the 30 methods of contemplation or meditation in the *DESM* not only cover all kinds of meditation from the time Buddhism was being brought into China until the date of the *DESM* being translated into Chinese, but also provide the basis and inspiration for the later meditators and translators of meditation texts to do further and more articulate translated works on the subject. The extent to which our *DESM* is connected with the above mentioned meditation texts may be seen from the tabular comparison below:

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*Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra* of 27 chapters and that of 30 chapters are of a later production than the original of the *Saddharmapundarika*. That is to say that the last three chapters were translated into Chinese separately and were added to the latter.

<sup>16</sup>. This is our Text.

<sup>17</sup>. There are five treatises on meditation in the extant Kumarajiva corpus. The chief one is the *Tso-ch'an-san-mei-ching* (T 614) also called *The Meditation Concentration Sūtra*, or the *Bodhisattva-dhyāna*. The first part of this work is a composite of pieces that Kumarajiva selected from the works of Kumaralata, Asvaghosa, Vasumitra, Samgharaksa, Upagupta, Samghasena and other masters of meditation. (It might be compiled by Kumarajiva and his pupil. in A.D.407). These all propound Theravada jhāna (dhāyana). The last part, which explains the Bodhisattva path, Kumarajiva took from the Vasudhara-sutra. (T14, No. 482.)

See Nobel, "Kumarajiva," p.230, n.1.

See 僧叡法師之“關中出禪經序”，T55, p.65a-b;

Venerable Yin Shun, *A Study of the Sastras and Acaryas of the Sarvastivada and Other Schools*, pp. 394, (Taipei, 1968).

It was translated into Japanese by Taishun Sato in KIK., Kyoshubu, vol.4. It presupposes *The Sūtra on the Secret Teaching of Meditation* (禪秘要法經), and sets forth a system of the practice of the Fivefold meditation which greatly influenced Master Tien-tai of China in his work (次第禪門) ..

<sup>18</sup>. "An Epitome of Meditation" (思惟略要法) is a work giving a general idea of the ways to different kinds of meditation. *Taisho*, No. 617. vol. XV, p. 297f. Translated by Kumarajiva into Chinese. This work was translated into English by Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya (*An Outline of Principal Methods of Meditation. Santiniketan: the author, 1972. Originally published in the Visva-Bharati Annals, vol. III, 1950*). Kumarajiva's version was translated into Japanese by Taishun Sato in KIK., Kyoshubu, vol.4.

This text sets forth ten kinds of meditation, among which the *Amitayurbuddhadhyana* meditation, the *tattva* meditation and the *Saddharmapundarika* meditation were very influential in later days.

<sup>19</sup>. Two vols. T15, No.618. Translated into Chinese by Buddhahadr, A.D. 398-421. This was translated into Japanese by Taishun Sato in KIK., Kyoshubu, vol.4. This text gives a systematical explanation of the meditation of Dharmatara and Bhuddhasena. It became very important in Chan Buddhism, and also was a forerunner to the mandalas of Vajrayana.

<sup>20</sup>. Taisho, vol. XV, P.645. Translated into Chinese by Buddhahadr around 413. This text (觀佛三昧海), resembling the *Pratyutpann-samādhi-sūtra* in some respects, has much in common with the *Amitayurdhyāna-sūtra* with regard to the structure and contents of the sūtras; the main difference being that, whereas the former taught meditation on the Buddhas in general, the latter enjoins the meditation on Amitabha alone.

<sup>21</sup>. *Fo-shwo-ta-an-pan-shen-i-jing* (佛說大安般守意經) was translated into Chinese by An Shi-kaio in about A.D. 147-170, during the period of the Eastern-han dynasty, A.D.25-220. *Shan-xing-fa-xiang-jing* (禪行法想經), 'Sutra on Perception in the Law of Practice of Meditation' was also translated by An Shi-kaio.

See also *Ekottarāgama-sūtra*, chapter 17, fasc. 8.



<b>Table A: The Methods of meditation contained in the above-mentioned meditation texts</b>	
<b>Text Number:</b>	<b>Contents:</b>
1. <b>The Yogācārabhūmi -sūtra</b>	The contemplation on the impermanence of the Five Aggregates and life; 1. Contemplation on impurities; 2. The contemplation on maitri; 3. Contemplation on the twelve links of Pratityasamutpada; 4. Contemplation on counting the breath; 5. Contemplation on the white bones; 6. Contemplation on the Buddhas (Buddha-samadhi); 7. Meditation for the ordinary worldlings; 8. Meditation for the Buddha's sravaka; 9. Meditation for the bodhisattvas.
2. <b>The DESM</b>	30 methods of meditation (as given in this work)
3. <b>The dhyāna-Samādhi-sūtra</b>	Fivefold meditation: 1. Contemplation on impurities (asubha); 2. Contemplation on the maitri; 3. Contemplation on the twelve links of Pratityasamutpada; 4. Contemplation on counting the breath; 5. Contemplation on the Buddha
4. <b>An Epitome of Meditation</b>	Ten kinds of meditation: 1. The contemplation on the four immeasurable minds; 2. The Contemplation on the impurities (asubha); 3. The Contemplation on the white skeleton; 4. The samadhi of Recollection of Buddha's thirty-two characteristics; 5. The contemplation on the physical body of the Buddha (rūpakāya); 6. The contemplation on the Dharma-kaya of the Buddha; 7. The contemplation on the Buddhas in the ten directions; 8. The contemplation on the Buddha of 'immeasurable life;' (Amitayu Buddha); 9. The contemplation on the real nature of dharmas; 10. The method of meditation towards the trance of the Lotus of Good Law (sad-dharma-pundrika). [the contemplation on the causes and conditions, and the contemplation on in and out-breathing are mentioned also].
5. <b>Dharmatara - dhyāna-sūtra</b>	Seven kinds of meditation: 1. Contemplation on counting the breath; 2. Contemplation on impurities; 3. Contemplation on the Dhātus; 4. Contemplation on the four immeasurable minds (catvāry-apramana-cittani); 5. Contemplation on the five skandhas; 6. Contemplation on the six Ayatanas; 7. Contemplation on the twelve parts of dependent origination (Pratityasamutpada). (Translated by Buddhahadra around 423 AD.)
6. <b>Buddha Dhyāna-samādhi Sagara-sūtra</b>	1. Contemplation on the Buddha's [thirty-one] characteristics. 2. Contemplation on the Buddha's mind; 3. Contemplation on the four immeasurable minds; 4. Contemplation on the Buddha's four respect-inspiring demeanour in walking standing, sitting, lying; 5. Contemplation on the Buddha's private parts in a sheath as that of a thoroughbred horse; <sup>22</sup> 6. Contemplation on the Buddha's image; <sup>23</sup> 7. Contemplation on the seven Buddhas; <sup>24</sup> 8. Contemplation on the Buddhas in the ten directions; 9. Contemplation on the Buddha in a secret manner. <sup>25</sup>
7. <b>The Great Discourse by the Buddha on the Mindfulness of Ānāpāna</b>	Counting the breathing with mindfulness (The sixteen stages of its development are given therein)

Also:

<b>Table B (in chronological order), Sūtra Number referred in the above table A</b>		
<b>Sūtra Number</b>	<b>Time of Being Translated</b>	<b>Translator</b>
7	A. D. 148-170	An Shi-kao
1	A. D. 284	Dharmaraksha
4	A. D. 405	Kumarajiva
2	A. D. 223-253/401-413	Zhi Qian/Kumarajiva
3	A. D. 407	Kumarajiva
6	A. D. 317-420	Buddhabhadra
5	A. D. 413	Buddhabhadra

<sup>22</sup>. See T15. p.683 ff.

<sup>23</sup>. See T15. P.690 ff.

<sup>24</sup>. See T15. p.693 ff; the seven Buddhas are 毘婆尸佛, 尸棄佛, 毘舍佛, 拘留孫佛, 拘那含牟尼佛, 迦葉佛, 釋迦牟尼佛 (Vipasyin, Siklin, Visvabhu, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kasyapiya, Sakyamuni-buddha).

<sup>25</sup>. This contemplation says that "one who has achieved the contemplation on the Buddhas and seen the Buddhas in this *Samādhi*, and found oneself in their presence, should make the body, speech and mind to be secret. He should not have an immoral life, he should not be proud. If one is proud, if he leads an immoral life, one is a destroyer of the Buddhadharmas, and the person who causes the immoral mind to rise in many people. He is one who causes the unit of samgha to become a divide he shows the power to cheat others. He is the follower of the Evil One (Māra), See T15, p.695 ff. This kind of advice is appearing in the *DESM* too.

The above two tables show that the most important meditation texts were translated into Chinese between the second century A. D. and the beginning of the fifth century A. D. Dharmaraksha and Buddhahadra were both great dhyāna masters amongst the translators. Anshikao, Zhi-Qian and Kumarajiva were famous translators in China. As regards the methods of meditation, we can see that there are common topics appearing in their translations. There are five major methods of meditation commonly introduced in them. These five kinds of meditation are (1) the contemplation on impurities, (2) the contemplation on the counting the breath, (3) the contemplation on loving kindness, (4) the contemplation on the twelve links of Dependent Origination, (5) the Contemplation on the Buddha's thirty-two Characteristics.

In addition to these five, the Contemplation on the *dhātus* (elements) in the DESM is seen in the above mentioned *sūtra*: No. 1; No. 4; and No.5 only. The Contemplation on the white bones is seen in *sātra*: No. 1; No. 2; and No. 4. The contemplation on the emptiness of all *dharmas* in the DESM is seen in *sūtra*: No. 4 only.

The eighth contemplation on a fresh corpse, the sixteenth contemplation on the Four Great Elements and restoring vitality, and the remaining contemplations in the DESM are not seen in the other early Chinese *dhāyana sūtras*. The bodhisattva's meditation in *sūtra* No. 1 and the contemplation on the Amitayū-buddha in *sūtra* No. 4 are not in the DESM.

### **The characteristics of the methods of meditation in the DESM**

One of the characteristics of the text is that it describes in detail the meditation experiences of the person who practices these meditation subjects. In particular, it gives in detail the mental phenomena occurring in the practice of the contemplation on the impurities. Every so often, it requires the practitioner to contemplate on one subject of meditation first; then, to contemplate on the whole of the same subject (e.g. the white bones) still to be gradually all over the *Trisāhasra* Universe. This has the characteristic of contemplating the ten universal spheres (*dasa- kasiṇāyatana*)<sup>26</sup>. From the state of impurity up to the state of purification this text describes the methods as the contemplation on the impurities and emptiness that are followed by such a practitioner.

Another characteristic of the text is that it gives the different kinds of meditation to the different categories and characters of persons. For instance, (1) to the person who has the conceited and heedless character, the contemplation on the impurities is given; (2) to the person who has the character of having much evil tendency and karmic hindrances (*pāpa-karma* and *antaraya*), the contemplation on the Buddha is given as the medicine for curing that kind of disease; (3) to the person who has the character of having much craving, desires, and distraction (*viksipta cittaka*), the contemplation on counting the breaths is taught; (4) to the person who has the character of being conceited (*māna*) and dullness, the contemplation on white bones is introduced; (5) For the attainment of arhathood, the contemplations on compassion (*maitri*), on the Buddha's supreme qualities, on the twelve links of Dependent Origination, on counting the breath, on the Four Great Elements, on emptiness, on the absence of non-action, on the absence of characteristics (*animitta*) and on the absence of intention (*apranihita*), are taught as essential.

From the beginning to the end of the text, the contemplation on the impurities stands out as the fundamental key. On this basis the other contemplations are taken up and progressively completed. The various kinds of meditations mentioned above for various characters are more systematically developed in subsequent works as the five meditations for settling the mind and

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<sup>26</sup>. 十遍處觀 *Dasa-kasiṇāyatana* has been discussed by Paravahera vajirañāna mahā thear in his *Buddhist Meditation*, p.139ff (Malaysia 1978).

getting rid of the five errors: desire, hatred, ignorance, self-attainment, and distraction. It is to be observed that the various types of meditation given as medicines for curing the spiritual diseases (of *rāga*, etc.) in our text, had provided inspiration for later meditation masters, both with respect to their own practice as well as to guiding their pupils.

It is noteworthy that the text does not employ such terms as mentioned specially in the *Abhidharmika* texts.<sup>27</sup> This text deals with the meditation topics in a very simple manner. Such technical details as the number and categories-characteristically given in the Abhidharmic texts-of *klesa upaklesas* abandoned at the different stages of progress are not to be found in our text.

Only a couple of Abhidharma terms like *ūśma-gata* and *Mūrdha*, are given. For these achievements, various methods of meditation are mentioned, such as basing on the contemplation on the impurities.

Neither does our text not contain such details as sixteen aspects (*akara*) of the Four truths etc. All these are in contrast to the expositions on meditations given in the *Abhidharma* texts, such as the *Abhidharmakosa*.

This may be the deliberate intention of the compiler: to base himself mainly on the agama texts, rather than following the *abhidharmika* tradition. When the author says, “detail as given in the Abhidharma” (T15, p.267c), it shows unmistakably that he is familiar with the Abhidharma expositions. Yet he seems to virtually ignore them altogether.

Finally, our text also does not give any terms that remind us of Mahayana Buddhism. The closest to this is the mere mention of the terms:” six *pāramitas*”, “the noble lineage (*arya-vamsa*) of the three vehicles” (this threefold vehicle is not necessarily Mahayanic.), and “suchness”.

The frequent mention of *śūnyatā* once again is not necessarily Mahayanic. Rather, it seems to indicate certain influence from the *śūnyatā* doctrine prevalent in the period of the author-3rd century-which is the time of Nagarjuna. That Nagarjuna is not necessarily a Mahāyanist has already been convincingly argued by some scholars.<sup>28</sup>

Yet another important feature of the text is that it deals conspicuously with the practical (as opposed to theoretical) aspects of meditation. Among the practical advice, one finds such instructions as the methods for restoring vitality after the body is weakened in the process of practicing the contemplation.

## **6. The methods of meditation in the *DESM* compared with those in the *nikāya/āgama* texts and such works as the *Vimuttimaggā* and the *Visuddhimaggā***

### **6.1 The subjects of meditation in Pali texts**

The following discussion is a survey of major kinds of meditation practices preserved in the Pali tradition.<sup>29</sup>

In the Pali scriptures, we come across some detailed descriptions of the numerous methods of meditation. Among them is the mention of nine successive stages of meditation (*nava-anupubha-vihāra*) which culminate in trance. These are in the old scriptures as well as in the later works such as the *Visuddhimaggā* of Buddhaghosa. They are: the four *rūpa-jhāna*, the *arūpa-jhāna*, and the ninth “suppression of consciousness and sensation (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*).<sup>30</sup> The first four are so called as they are attained with the help of *rūpa* subject (i.e.

<sup>27</sup>. There is only one place where it says, rather casually, “details as given in the *Abhidharma*”.

<sup>28</sup>. E.g. A.K. Warder, ‘Is Nagarjuna a Mahayanist?’, ‘in *Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*’ (ed. Sprung), Dordrecht (Ridel) 1973.

<sup>29</sup>. See Vis.

<sup>30</sup>. See Vis. XXIII, also ‘*Path to Deliverance*,’ Nyanatiloka. Lake House Bookshop, Colombo.

subject with form) of meditation. They are known respectively as the first, the second, the third and the fourth *jhāna*. The next four are so called on account of the fact that they are induced by using arūpa subjects (formless subjects) of meditation. They are named respectively as *ākāsānañcāyatana*, *viññāna -ñcāyatana*, *ākiñcaññāyatana*, and *neva-sañña-nāsaññāyatana*.<sup>31</sup>

Venerable Dr. Rahula remarks that the treatment of the *dhyānas* found in the *Mahāyāna* and *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma* is on the whole closer to the original Pali Suttas than that found in the Theravāda *Abhidhamma*, particularly in the later *Abhidhamma* texts.<sup>32</sup> He has also pointed out that the list of five *rūpāvacara-jhāna* is not found in the original Pali *suttas*, and is a later development in the *Abhidhamma*.

In the *DESM*, we have only the mere mention of *asta-samāpatti* (eight- attainments or emancipations) (八解脱) attained by every arhat, i.e. four *rūpadhyānas* and four *ārūpadhyūnas*. But it is not clear of the factors in each *dhyānas*, as no details are given.

Details of the following are not found in the *DESM*. How to enter step by step, into the nine stages of trance; how he who wishes to practice meditation should proceed, what objects for meditation he should choose according to his taste and capacity. They are found in subsequent meditation texts translated into Chinese.

In the *Vimuttimaggā* and the *DESM*, it is said: he who wishes to practice meditation, should first of all search for a good spiritual friend and well-wisher (*kalyana-mitra*). This “friend and well-wisher” will be his guide. Like a friend, like a relative, he will look after him (the novice). He (the *kalyana-mitra*) must be well-versed in all the sections of the scriptures and also must have an insight into the Four Noble Truths.<sup>33</sup>

Without such a “friend and well-wisher” the novice may go fatally wrong as an elephant without its driver or a chariot without a charioteer. In the Pali scriptures, specially in the *Visuddhi-maggā*, there are long discussions about the places which are suitable and those which are unsuitable for meditation.<sup>34</sup>

One should practice meditation in a solitary place where there is the least possible distraction for the mind. In this treatise it is said: “Sounds cause disturbance in meditation, like entering a jungle of thorns”.<sup>35</sup>

The Pali commentary of the *Satipatthana-sutta*<sup>36</sup> similarly advises a bhikkhu meditator conditioned by sensual attachment to seek a secluded place to have his mind concentrated and freed from such sense objects. The same kind of advice as to the need for spiritual guides and solitude is given in the *DESM* (see *the monks’ life in the DESM*).

There are forty subjects mentioned in the *Visuddhi-maggā*, by means of which, one may practice meditation. They are as follows: ten “devices” (*kasinas*), ten “impurities” (*asubhas*), ten “recollections” (*anussatti*), four kinds of “immeasurable minds” or “divine states,” four “formless states,” one “perception,” and one “specification”.

Many among these forty are also to be found in the *DESM*, though often with considerable differences in detail.

<sup>31</sup>. For the eight absorptions as objects for the development of insight (*vipassanā*), See *samatha- vipassanā*.--- Full details in *Vis. VIII-X*.

<sup>32</sup>. Walpola Rahula, ‘*Zen & The Taming Of The Bull. Towards the Definition of Buddhist Thought*’, p. 109, London(1978).

<sup>33</sup>. 解脱道論, *The Path of Freedom (Vimuttimaggā)*, by the Arahant Upatissa, translated into Chinese by Tipitaka Sanghapala (in A.D.50, of the Lain dynasty, A.D.502-557), translated from the Chinese into English by the Rev, N. R. M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera, first BPS edition, Kandy 1977, p.32.

<sup>34</sup>. *Visuddhimaggā*, Pali, IV, pp. 118-22; Eng. IV, pp. 138-13.

<sup>35</sup>. *Ibid.*, Pali, X, p. 330; Eng. P. 380; Anguttara-,Part V. 133-5.

<sup>36</sup>. Walpola Rahula, ‘*Zen & The Taming Of The Bull Towards the Definition of Buddhist Thought*’, London 1978, p. 15. *Sumangalavilāsini*, DA II (Tripitaka Publication Press, Colombo 1925), p.549; *Vis. PtS ed.* (1975), p.269.

We may note that the XII, XIII, XIVb, XIVc, XV, XVI, XXIX contemplations in the *DESM* correspond to the first four devices in the *Visudhimagga*.

### **Contemplation on impurities:**

In the *DESM*, the contemplation on impurities stands out as the fundamental contemplation to be achieved by a meditator as a necessary foundation (cf. supra. V). We give below a description (taken from Ñānamoli's translation of the work).

In order to have aversion to the body or the physical beauty, the contemplation on impurities is practiced. The sage Bali practiced contemplation by means of the dead body of a woman which was swollen and rotten. First, he observed it minutely and very carefully. Afterwards, he concentrated thoughts on its image. At the end (of this contemplation), he saw his own body just like that without any difference. He attained the first trance with the help of this carcass.

Buddhaghosa in his *visuddhi-magga*, has discussed elaborately this contemplation on the carcass.

This is the general rule regarding this contemplation that one should not practise it with the help of a fresh carcass. One should practice it by means of a dead body of one's own sex. This is rule applying to ordinary practitioner. But one who has extraordinary merit (as this sage Bali) may do even the contrary.

It is said: one should approach such a carcass very carefully, because it may be guarded by ferocious animals. One should inform the other mendicants of the monastery, before going for such a purpose. One should go there with a stick, and not go too near, nor should one remain too far from it. One should not stand to the lee side (wind blowing side) of the corpse. If one goes too near, one may be frightened at the very beginning and thus one's contemplation may be disturbed. If one stands to lee-ward, the excessive bad smell may disturb one's contemplation. If one stands too far away, one is unable to see each part of the carcass clearly. one should observe it minutely with care. When it is impressed in one's mind, when one can see it even closing one's eyes, one should leave it and go to a suitable place to concentrate one's thoughts on its image.<sup>37</sup>

This kind of contemplation is also given in the *DESM*. The important difference, regarding the way of getting the mental visualization, is that the *DESM* teaches the practitioner to imagine a part of one's own body festering then developed this visualization to one's whole body, and the others, finally the beings in the whole cosmos.

### **Contemplation on the skeleton:**

In the *DESM*, there is a long discussion on the contemplation on a skeleton. As mentioned before, the aim of this contemplation is to cultivate aversion to the attachment of physical beauty. It may be practiced even by means of a single piece of bone.

He who has practiced it well, can see whenever he wishes --- his own body or others' body, as a body of bones, without flesh and skin. So, physical beauty can not tempt him.

In the *Visuddhimagga* it is said: a young and a beautiful woman, beautifully decorated, was running away from her husband. On the way she met the Elder Mahātissa. Wishing to tempt him, she laughed aloud. The Elder Mahātissa, being startled by the sound of her laughter looked at her. As soon as he saw her teeth, they immediately, brought to his mind, the image of a skeleton---a body of bones.

After a while, the monk met the husband of that woman who asked: "Sir, have you seen a

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<sup>37</sup>. *Visuddhimagga. Pali*, pp. 178-96; *Vis. VI*, pp. 205-25.

woman passing by this way? The Elder replied:

“Whether it was a man or woman  
That went by I noticed not;  
But only that on this high road  
There goes a group of bones.”<sup>38</sup>

This kind of contemplation find parallels in the IX, X, and XI contemplations of the *DESM*. But once again, in the case of *DESM*, it teaches the meditator to start from a part of his body; then develop the visualization to his whole body, then to others, and then to cover the whole cosmos.

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<sup>38</sup>. *Vis.* I, pp. 21-2; *Visuddhi-magga*, Pali. Pp. 20-21; vi. P.193.

## 6.2. The methods of meditation in the *DESM* compared with those in the *Vimuttimaggā (Vim.)* and the *Visuddhimaggā (Vis.)*

Seven groups of the forty subjects of meditation in the *Vim. & Vis.:*  
**Names** of the subjects of meditation in the *Visuddhimaggā:*  
 Groups of thirty methods of meditation in the *DESM:*↓  
**Names** of the subjects of meditation in the *DESM:*↓

(i) The objects Called <i>Kasina</i> :→	(1) Earth, (2) Water, (3) Fire, (4) Air, (5) Blue-green, (6) Yellow, (7) Red, (8) White, (9) Light, (10) Space, (11) Consciousness <sup>39</sup>	(i) <b><i>Kasinas</i></b> :→ the text are connected with the Water-device, Fire-device and Wind or Air-device.	The XXVII, XXIX, XXX XXX contemplations in Earth, Water, Fire, Air or Wind are in the Fascicle Three of the text (T15, p. 266a-267b) also connected with the devices.
(ii) <i>Asubhas</i> , or objects of impurity:→	(11) A Swollen Corpse, (12) A Discolored Corpse, (13) A Festering Corpse, (14) A Fissured Corpse, (15) A Mangled Corpse, (16) A dismembered Corpse, (17) A Cut and Dismembered Corpse, (18) A Bleeding Corpse, (19) A Worm-Infested Corpse, (20) A Skeleton;	(ii) <b>The objects of impurity:</b> ↓ (I)The initial meditational experience in the contemplation on impurities; (II) White Bones; (III) Impurities of Festering; (IV) Swollen [Body, Full of] Pus, Blood, or and ITS Variation; (V) Thin Outer Skin; (VI) Accumulation of Worms Under the Inner Thick Skin, (VII) Extremely Red or Muddy or Turbid Skeletons Washing Skins;	(VIII) Newly Dead Person; (IX) Complete [skeletal] body, (X) Breaking up of the skeleton into disjointed bones; (XI) [White] light emitting from the white bones; (XII) Four Great Elements or the meditational experiences of ninety-eight fetters; (XIII) The Roots of the Fetters, or the Four Great Elements, (XIVa) Variation in contemplation, (XVI) Contemplation on the Four Great Elements – restoring vitality; (XVIII) The impurities of the ten categories of <i>rūpa</i>
(iii) Ten <i>Anussatis</i>	(21) Contemplation on the Virtue of the Buddha, (22) of	(iii) <b><i>Anussatis</i></b> or Contemplation:	(XIX) The Contemplations: of the Ten Titles
			of the Thirty-two

<sup>39</sup> Regarding the list of *kasinas* in the *Vimuttimaggā* and the *Visuddhimaggā*, there is a difference, as the *Vimuttimaggā* takes the consciousness as one of the ten *kasinas* and *Visuddhimaggā* takes the light. *The Path of Freedom (Vimutti-maggā)* by the Arahant Upatissa, translated into Chinese (解脱道論) by Tipitaka Sanghapala (in A.D.50, of the Lan dynasty, A.D.502-557), translated from the Chinese into English by the Rev. N. R. M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera, first BPS edition 1977, reprinted 1995, p.63.

→ The Doctrine, (23) of  
The Order, (24)  
of Morality, (25)  
of Liberality, (26)  
The Devas, (27) of  
The Body, (28) of  
The Breath, (29) of  
Peace, (30)

Characteristics,  
the Eighty Minor  
Marks of the  
Buddhas, or of  
Consecration  
(*Abhisekara*), of the  
Doctrine (i.e. the  
impermanence of the  
five Aggregates, the  
Twelve Parts of  
Dependent  
Origination, etc.), of  
the Arhats, the  
Morality, Liberality,  
The Devas, (XVII) the  
mindfulness of the  
Body, (XX)  
Contemplation on  
Counting the Breaths;

(iv) Four (31) Friendliness,  
Excellent (32) Compassion,  
Qualities (33) Sympathetic joy  
(*Brahmaviharas*) within the XXVI

(iv) Four (34) The Great  
Excellent Friendliness and  
Qualities Compassion are given

(*Brahmaviharas*) (34) Equanimity  
contemplation on the  
attainment of  
Srotapatti-marga  
(T15, p.260c-261a-  
b), and Fascicle Three  
of the text (T15,  
p.263a-264a, p.264c-  
265a),  
The term of the Four  
Brahmaviharas (四梵行) is given in  
the  
Fascicle Three of the  
text too (T15, p.269)

(V) Four Formless (35) The Sphere (v) Four Formless The four formless  
Spheres: → of Infinite Space, Sphere: → spheres are included  
(36) the Sphere of in the *Asta-vimoksa*,  
Infinite and the nine degrees  
Consciousness, of *Samadhi* which are  
(37) the sphere of just as a term  
Nothingness, (38) mentioned within the  
The Sphere of XXX Contemplation  
Neither Perception of the text.  
Nor Non-perception;

(vi) The (39) The (vi) The  
Perception of the Perception of the Perception of the ---- ---- ----  
Loathsomeness of Loathsomeness of Loathsomeness of  
Nutriment: → Nutriment: Nutriment: →  
The Analysis of (40) The Analysis (vii) The Analysis (XIVc) The External



The Four Elements:→	of the Four Elements.	of the Four Elements:→	Four Great Elements, or the Contemplation on the <i>Sunyata</i> through gradual understanding, (XV) Internal Four Great Elements; and the last part of the XIVb contemplation on the Earth Element; Contemplation on the Earth in text
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The above comparative table shows that the subjects of meditation in the *Vimuddhimagga* and the *Visuddhimagga* are mostly found in the *DESM*. However, some descriptions of the subjects in the *DESM* are not as clear as in both the *Vimuddhimagga* and the *Visuddhimagga* while others are just mentioned by name in the *DESM* without any details. For instance, the contemplation on counting the breath is shortly described thus: “[The practitioner] should fix the mind on the navel or the middle of the waist to follow or pursue the exhaled breath and inhaled breath in such manner: first counting second following, or second counting third following, or third counting fourth following, or fourth counting fifth following, or fifth counting sixth following, or sixth.

Counting seventh following, or seventh counting eighth following, or eighth counting ninth following, or ninth counting tenth following; when he comes to end of the tenth following [the process of respiration] He should in the same way repeatedly pursue the exhaled breath and inhaled breath up to ten times, then he should give up counting the breaths, but concentrate. The practitioners may use the odd or even to count the breathing out or in. They may count quickly [or slowly count], according to their will.” While the terms of its sixteen stages of development is just mentioned thus: “This contemplation on counting the breaths consists of sixteen bases or divisions.<sup>40</sup>”

Both the *Visuddhimagga* and the *DESM* have the contemplation on the Buddha. But in the former, one is asked to recollect the Buddha’s virtues as given in the phrase: “*Iti pi so Bhagavā, arhant, sammā-sambuddho...*”

In the *DESM*, the practitioners contemplate in detail on the thirty-two *Mahā-purusa-laksanas* of the Buddha. The so-called eighty secondary marks are also mentioned though only in name.

According to the *DESM*, the method of contemplation on the Buddha is of two kinds. One is for those who are not intelligent and other is for those who are intelligent. Those who are not intelligent should begin it with the help of the contemplation on a skeleton.

They should see an inch of space on their forehead as without flesh and skin. They should see only the naked bone and fix their thoughts on that object. After they have seen this, they should see, by gradually increasing the size of the bone, their whole body as skeleton. They should see it as white as white-snow-jade. After that, they should see it in blue colour. At the end again they have to see it as white.

When they see that the white skeleton is sending forth absolutely white and bright light, they will see in it, the “Sakyamuni-buddha”. The intelligent persons at the very beginning should

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<sup>40</sup>. “此數息法有十六科,” T15, p.265b.

contemplate the bright and transparent light. When seeing it, they see in it the former seven Buddhas.

The XV the XVII and the first part of the XVIII contemplation in the *DESM* deal with the subject of meditation on the body. The contemplation on body in the *Visuddhimagga* is the meditation upon the thirty-two parts of the body. These thirty-parts are arranged in six groups. It is also said in the *Visuddhimagga* that, the disciple who wishes to attain Arhatship through the practice of this *Kammatthana* should approach a good teacher for instruction. The teacher should give him instruction in the subject, explaining the sevenfold method of study and the tenfold method of practice.

In the *DESM*, the contemplation on the body is the meditation upon the thirty-six parts of the body (as opposed to thirty-two in both the *Vimuttimaggā*<sup>41</sup> and the *Visuddhimagga*.) but not all these parts are clearly explained. There is also no classification as in the *Vis* regarding these thirty-six parts. The sevenfold method of study and the tenfold method of practice as given in the *Visuddhimagga* are also not to be found.

The meditation on the Four Great Elements is the last of the forty subjects of *samatha* meditation as they are set forth in both the *Vimuttimaggā*<sup>42</sup> and the *Visuddhimagga*. The main object of this meditation is to free the mind from the conception of individuality in regard to the physical body, and to realize its elemental nature with no thought of personal distinction.

These Four Great Elements are called “*mahādhātu*” The *Mahā-rahulovada Sutta*<sup>43</sup> gives an additional element, space which is described as twofold: personal and impersonal. “Personal space” refers to the cavitory organs of the body such as the mouth, nostrils, ears, etc.

In the *Dhātuvibhanga Sutta*,<sup>44</sup> we find six elements described, the sixth, consciousness (*Vīññana-dhātu*) is given as a subject of meditation that deals with the immaterial objects (*Arūpa-kammatthana*). In the *EDSM*, too these six elements are given as subjects of contemplation.

It is said in the *Visuddhimagga* that the practitioner of sluggish intellect, who wishes to develop this subject of meditation, should study the four elements in detail from forty-two aspects after receiving instruction from his teacher. Living in a suitable dwelling, and having performed all his duties, he should retire into solitude and seclusion and develop the subject from aspects: (1) Synthetic contemplation on the constituents of the four elements; (2) Analytic contemplation on the constituents of the four elements; (3) Synthetic contemplation on their characteristics; (4) Analytic contemplation on their characteristics. When these are done the elements manifest themselves to the practitioner without any individual conception, and the mind attains to access-concentration. Furthermore, the four elements should be contemplated according to eleven methods.<sup>45</sup>

In the *DESM*, the meditation on the external four great elements is the XIVc contemplation; the meditation on the internal or personal four great elements is the XV contemplation, and the last part of the XIVb contemplation in the text. The following are some of the practical instructions given in the *DESM*:

“The body originated from the Four Great Elements. It is dwelling in the same village of the six entrances.” “The practitioner should not be finding pleasure in too much speech, but retire into solitude and seclusion to contemplate the emptiness of all the *dhammas*. Within the

<sup>41</sup> *The Path of Freedom (Vimutti-magga, 解脱道論)*, first BPS edition 1977, reprinted 1995, P.171

<sup>42</sup> *The Path of Freedom (Vimutti-magga)*, first BPS edition 1977, reprinted 1995, P.197ff.

<sup>43</sup> See M. vol. i.

<sup>44</sup> See M. 140.

<sup>45</sup> Paravahera Vajiranana Mahathera, *Buddhist Meditation In Theory and Practice*, P. 322-327, Malaysia 1987.

emptiness of these *dharmas*, there is no earth, no water, no fire and wind. *Rūpa-skandha* is upside down, and arises from the illusions. *Vedanā-skandha* comprises causes and conditions; it arises from the deeds (*karmas*). *Samjñā-skandha* is up side down; it is not suspending. *Vijñāna-skandha* is not seen; it comprises the karmic causes and conditions; it produces the seeds of craving and attachment. In such ways, he meditates on the body. The earth element came to exist from the appearance of emptiness (空見); the appearance of emptiness is also empty. What is there solidity or hardness that could be considered as the earth element? In this way he can infer and analyze the earth element....”

While he contemplates thus upon the four elements, the concept of “I” or “mine,” “man” or “woman” will disappear. The mind will be become established in the thought that there are merely elements, without owner, without entity.

“Again, the practitioner should contemplate that the fires outside the body originate from the causes and conditions. When there are the necessary causes and conditions they arise; with the cessation or separation of these conditions they come to cease. When these fires are produced, they do not come from some other place; when they disappear, they are not going to be stored up in another place. They are illusory, decaying and never ceasing.”

“Again, the practitioner should contemplate on that ‘the external water elements of the body are the running waters in the rivers, in the oceans and lakes, so on. When those water and other are produced, they do not come from some other place; when they disappear, they are not going to be stored up in another place... The wind elements are united with the space (or atmosphere); the wind is originated from causes and conditions. The wind elements are neither in the body, nor outside of the body, and nor in the middle. Owing to the upside-down mind (or the perverted thought), they are seen.’ When one is thinking of this, the external wind elements do not arise.”

“The practitioner should contemplate the earth elements in the body. The earth elements in the body are the bones, teeth, nails, hairs, intestines, stomach, belly (or abdomen), liver, heart, lungs, so on; all those solid things are the earth elements.” The practitioner should know all the earth elements in the body. One should know that “the bones become having not been before; having become they cease to be;” so are the water elements, the fire elements, the wind elements in the body.

The practitioner also should know that: “The external Earth Elements are impermanent; so are the Earth Elements in the body. “The external fires without suspending; how can the warm of fires in the body be last long?” “The external water elements are impermanent; their force can not last long. The water elements in the body are also impermanent, because they are dependant on [the external water elements] as causes and conditions.”

“The external wind elements are impermanent; their force can not last long because they originate from causes and conditions; they come to cease when their causes and conditions come to cease. The wind elements in the body are compounded of unreal things; ...When he is contemplating on these, all the wind elements in the body come to cease and disappear.” Having such a variety of contemplation and thought, where could the person, the earth elements, the water elements, the fire elements and the wind elements exist? They are the corruptible, unreal, impermanent and erroneous thoughts. The practitioner who devotes himself to this practice will soon realize the state of emptiness, and will eliminate the idea of individual existence, and will then be free from all attachments. Consequently, he concentrates on the body calmly, does not have the sense or characteristic of the body (不識身相); but both body and mind will be at rest, tranquil and happy.”

The Six Great Elements in the *DESM* are also described in the following words: “The practitioner should contemplate on the Six Great Elements. The Six Great Elements are the Earth Element, the Water Element, the Fire Element, the Wind Element, the Element of Space, and the Element of Consciousness. One should carefully infer and analyze them one by one in such a way: ‘Does the body belong to the earth elements? Does it belong to the water elements? Does it belong to the fire elements? Does it belong to the wind elements? Is it belonging to the element of consciousness? Is it belonging to the element of space?’ So one contemplates on them in such a manner: From which element has the body originated? From which element will it be separated? [Herein, one comprehends that] “the six elements have no controller; the body also has no self.” “This body is compounded of the six elements, originated from the causes and conditions. When the six elements depart from each other, and come to cease; the body is also impermanent.”<sup>46</sup>

The aspects and methods of developing the contemplation upon the four elements as given in the *Vimuttimaggā*<sup>47</sup> and the *Visuddhimaggā* are not clearly seen in the *DESM*.

Another point worth mentioning is that where as the *Vis* divides meditational practices into two broad categories: *samātha* and *vipassanā*; there is no such division in the *DESM*. From this point of view, our text may be said to be more in conformity with the spirit of the *nikāya* and *āgama* texts.

Another important difference between the *Vis*. and the *DESM* is that the latter gives a considerable amount of advice on how to restore vitality of the weakened meditator. (For more details, cf. supra IV.). Finally, the contemplation on *sunyatā*, recurring many times in the *DESM* is not to be found in the *Vis*. (For more details, cf. infra VII.).

### 6.3. The methods befitting various character – types

The main object of our text, the *DESM*, is to induce the meditation students to achieve the arhatship. Accordingly, when the text was composed its author probably only laid stress on two main points: (1) the subjects of meditation, (2) the way of befitting character. The first point has already been discussed above. As regards the second point; as it seems to have inspired various practicable aspects of Buddhism in China, we discuss here in some detail.

The *Visuddhimaggā* gives a long description as to how to judge a person’s character. The *DESM* has no such kind of description. We propose here to compare the way of befitting a certain character in the *Visuddhimaggā* with that in the *DESM*.

According to the *Visuddhimaggā*,<sup>48</sup> the character (*carita*) of human beings is of six kinds: disposed to lust, to hate, to delusion, to faith, to intellectuality and to agitation. Although there are a great variety of dispositions, owing to the mixed nature of mental states, these six types are generally stated as predominant. The commentaries explain that the character of a person is the expression of his mentality and is determined by his previous *kamma* and by the condition of his physical elements. Human beings are also of different temperaments as determined by racial differences, geographical situation and climatic conditions. Just as there are many kinds of individual character, so there are many kinds of individual character, so there are many methods of meditation. The following table is the way of befitting character in the *Visuddhimaggā* compared with that in the *DESM*. See a table in next page:

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<sup>46</sup>. 六大散滅，身亦無常。 See T15, p.247a.

<sup>47</sup> *The Path of Freedom (Vimutti-maggā)*, BPS edition reprinted 1995, P.198ff.

<sup>48</sup>. *Vis*. III.

Character or nature of the Meditation student:	The suitable subject of meditation for the special nature in the Vis.	The classification of the Nature or Character of meditation student in the <i>DESM</i> :	The way or method of Meditation befitting nature according to the <i>DESM</i> :
1. <i>Rāga</i> or Lust	10 <i>Asubhas</i> & <i>Kāyagatā-sati</i>	<i>Rāga</i> or Lust	The first 13 methods, the XI <sub>a</sub> methods, the XVI Method, the VII Method, and the XVIII method of meditation
2. Dosa or Hate	4 <i>kasinas</i> : <i>Nila, Pita, Lohita, Odāta</i> , 4 <i>Brahma-vihāras</i>	2. Dosa or Hate	4 <i>Brahma-vihāras</i>
3. Moha or Dullness; Vitakka or Agitation	<i>Ānāpāna-sati</i>	3. <i>Vitakka</i> or Agitation	<i>Ānāpāna-sat</i> , the XX method of meditation
4. <i>Saddhā</i> or Faith	6. <i>Anussatis</i> : <i>Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, Sila, Cāga, Devatā</i> (6 subjects)	4. <i>Moha</i> or Dullness; <i>Saddhā</i> or Faith	The XIX method of contemplation on the Buddha's Ten Titles; the thirty-two marks; the eighty minor marks; of Arhats; of the Doctrine; of Devata; of Sila,
5. <i>Buddhi</i> or Intelligence	<i>Marana-sati</i> , <i>Upassamānussati</i> <i>Āhārepatikkūla-Saññā</i> , & <i>Catudhātu-Vavatthāna</i>	5. <i>Buddhi</i> or Intelligence	The XIV <sub>c</sub> method, the XV method, and the last part of the XIV <sub>b</sub> method of meditation, the VIII method of contemplation on the fresh corpse
6. <i>Sabba Carita</i> or Mixed Character	6 <i>Kasinas</i> : <i>Pathavi, Āpo, Tejo, Vāyo, Ākāsa, Āloka</i> , & 4 <i>Arūpas</i>	6. <i>SabbaCarita</i> or Mixed Character	The XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXIX, and XXX methods of contemplation

As can be seen from the above tabular comparison, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, eleven of these subjects of meditation; i.e. the ten Objects of Impurity and Mindfulness of the Body, are suitable for the person who is of a lustful nature. Eight of the subjects; i.e. the four *Brahmaviharas*, and the four color-*kasinas*, are suitable for him who is disposed to hatred. For him who is deluded or who is excitable, the only subject suitable is Mindfulness of Counting the Breaths. The first six Recollections are suitable for him who, by his disposition, is prone to faith. There are four subjects, Recollection or Mindfulness of Death, Mindfulness of Peace, the Perception of the Loathsomeness of Nutriment and the Analysis of the Four Elements, which are suitable for the intelligent. The remaining *Kasinas* and the four Formless Spheres are suitable for all kinds of dispositions.

On the other hand, the methods of meditation befitting character in the *DESM*, as seen in the above table, can also be roughly classified into six types, as given above.

### Conclusion:

The *DESM* is, described in the Chinese Buddhist Catalogue, as one of “the Works of the Sages of the Western County (i.e. India).” It is a collection of meditation teachings based on those in the *āgamas* and the works of the Indian sages. As the author used the style of a Buddhist *sūtra* to compose the *DESM*; his name is hidden from us. His intention was not to forge a *sūtra*, but to stress that the teachings he compiled were those of the *Sūtra-Pitaka*. The text shows that meditation is the gateway to *nirvana*, the path for attaining arhatship and enlightenment. It is neither an *Abhidharmic* exposition, nor a polemics. The author was quite clearly a *sutradhara*,

and must have been a meditator as well as a preacher-the characteristics of a Dārśtāntika. Judging by the content and the time the text was brought to China, the author was living around the 3rd century A.D.

The final goal of practicing meditation, as given in the text, as well as the doctrines contained therein; indicate that the author was not a follower of Mahāyana Buddhism. This contention is supported by the author's expressed attitude towards meat-eating-a taboo for all traditional Mahāyanists. It is stated explicitly that the meditator, to regain his vitality after the body having been weakened in practicing meditation, may eat "meat of threefold purity"(i.e. meat may be taken under three circumstances). It seems reasonable to assume that the author belongs to the Dārśtāntika-yogācāra lineage.

According to the catalogues of the Chinese translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka, there were in all three translations made from the original. However, two of the three have been lost. The present text was retranslated (or revised) by Kumarajiva in the early 5th century A.D. The original seems to have been in Sanskrit.

The *DESM* provided the Chinese people with much information on methods of meditation. It explained in graphic detail about 30 kinds of meditation. It served as a manual of Buddhist meditation in the Northern Tradition of Buddhism. It had inspired such eminent translators as An shi-kao, Zhi-qian, Kumarajiva, Tsu-khu Kin-shan and Dharmamitra, to subsequently translate more meditation texts into Chinese to remedy the deficiency of the *DESM*, to serve as supplementary material for the need of the Chinese practitioners.

There are many similarities between the *DESM* and *Visuddhimagga*. For instance, for attaining Arhatship and *Nirvana*, both texts stress the importance of virtue (戒), meditation (定) and wisdom (慧). Regarding wisdom, the text stresses insight into the Four Noble Truths. The subjects of meditation, unlike in both the *Vimuttimagga* and the *Visuddhimagga*, are given in brief. This deficiency of details seemed to have been noted by kumarajiva, who supplemented them by translating the following texts:

(1) *The Buddhādhyāna-samādhisagara-sūtra* (觀佛三昧海經), (2) *Sūtra spoken by Buddha on Overcoming Lust* (佛說伏姪經), (3) *Sūtra on the Emptiness of all the five skandhas* (五陰皆空經), (4) *Sūtra on the Secret Importance of Curing the (Heart) Disease of Those who Engage in Contemplation* (治禪病秘要經), (5) *Sūtra spoken by the Buddha on the Thirty-seven Articles of the Practice of Meditation* (佛說禪行三十七道品經), (6) *The Great Discourse by the Buddha on the Mindfulness of Ānāpāna* (佛說大安般守意經), (7) *Sūtra on Perception in the Law of Practice of Meditation* (禪行法想經), (8) *the Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra* (修行道地經), (9) *The Dhyāna-samādhi Sūtra* (坐禪三昧經), (10) *Dharmatara-dhyāna-sūtra* (達磨多羅禪經), *Sūtra on the Important Explanation of the Law of Meditation* (禪法要解經), (11) *Sūtra on Blaming Human Desire or Lust, and on the Importance of the Meditation* (禪要訶欲經), (12) *Vimuktimārga-śāstra* (解脫道論), (13) *Satyiddhi-sastra* (成實論), (14) *Abhidharma-kosa-bhāṣyam* (阿毗達磨俱舍論), as well as many others.

The meditation methods given in our text, as well as translations in those of the Sarvastivada, must have influenced the Chinese meditation tradition.

Before the introduction of Buddhism into China, Chinese spiritual practitioners, particularly the Taoists, had been greatly interested in finding secret methods for longevity and gaining psychic power. We can well imagine how eager these Chinese practitioners must have been, to learn about the meditation techniques from the "Western Region" (India and Central Asia). or These techniques provided for the transformation of consciousness as well as ways for

spiritual experiences and visions. The Buddhist method of *ānāpānasmṛti*, in particular, must have attracted the Taoists interested in “Vital Energy” - even though the Buddhist method of teaching mindfulness of breathing differs from the latter. It is therefore no accident that some of the earliest Buddhist works translated in China deal with the subject of meditation. An-Shikao, as early as 148 A.D., translated the *Ānāpāna-anusmṛti-sūtra* (*An-ban-shou-yi-jing*). Cheng-hui 陳慧, a scholar in the time of An Shi-Kao, did a commentary on the *Ānāpāna-anusmṛti-sūtra*. Kang Sheng-hui 康僧會, a pupil of Cheng-hui, using this commentary and his own understanding, wrote several important expositions on *Samatha* and *Vipassana* in the *Collection of the Practices of the Six Perfections*.

The earliest translation of our DESM must have been to fulfill this need. Other meditation texts translated in the early period of Chinese Buddhism include Sangharakṣa’s *Yogacara-bhūmi-sūtra* (translated by Dharmarakṣa in 284 A.D.), and several other works (see supra V) translated by Kumārajīva and others.

The clear expositions on *samatha* and *vipasyana* by Zhi-zhe (-da-shi) 智者大師, A.D. 530-597), founder of the Tien Tai School, with the master’s stress on the gradual steps to be taken up systematically in meditation progress, must have been influenced by these above-mentioned translations. He combined *samatha* and *vipasyana* in the practice of the mindfulness of breathing, with detailed steps such as counting and following the breaths. This is clearly reminiscent of *ānāpāna-anusmṛti* described in the Indian Buddhist texts. Zhi-zhe’s also emphasises the need for selecting a competent *kalyana-mitra* as instructor, and for a conducive environment, indications of the influence of these translations.

The early Chinese *Chan* (a transliteration of *dhyāna*) School was closely connected with the Yogācāra tradition. The principal text of the school<sup>49</sup> (until the time of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng (636-712) had been the *Lankavatara Sūtra*, a major Yogācāra text expounding the doctrine of *Vijñāptimatratā*. The earlier (non-Mahāyāna) Yogācārin appeared to have evolved from the Dārstāntika meditators.

### **Discussions in the ancient Chinese meditation tradition on “Chan”:**

Discussions can be seen in ancient Chinese meditation tradition on “Chan sickness” (禪病) – i.e. What can go wrong in meditation practices, and how to deal with them-must have been inspired by the Restoration of the Health of the Meditators as found in our DESM. Similarly, a later work, entitled 禪病秘要經 (*Sūtra on the Secret Importance of Curing the (Mental) Disease of those who Engage in Contemplation*), should also be noted.

The earliest Indian sources of influence in the Chinese Buddhist meditation tradition, needs an in-depth study. It should be a topic of interest for the Buddhist historians. It is our hope that some competent scholars and meditators will in the near future enlighten us further in this field.

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<sup>49</sup> It was said to have been brought to China by Bodhidharma, until the time of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng (A.D 636-712),

## ABBREVIATIONS

“T.” is used to indicate the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* (大正新修大藏經).

All the references of the Pali canonical texts are to the Pali Text Society editions.

- A. = Anguttaranikāya  
AKB = Abhidharma-kosabhasya T29  
AKB (E) = English translation of Abhidharma-kosabhasya  
Blmj = Jin-gang-po-ra-bo-lo-mi-jing T8, No. 235  
Byj = Zhi-chan-ping-bi-yao-jing T15 No. 620.  
Chanjing = Da-mo tuo-lo-chan-jing T15 No. 618.  
Chu-ji,  
Or CST = Sheng-yiu, Chu-san-tsang-chi-ji, T55, No. 2145  
Da-zhou-lu = Ming-quan, Da-zhou-kan-ding-zhong-jing-mu-lu, T55, No. 2153  
DĀ = Dirghāgama T1 No. 1  
D = Dighanikāya (figures: number of sutta)  
DA. = Dighanikāya Atthakathā (Sumangalavilāsini) (PTS)  
DCBT. = Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms  
DESM = The Discourse on the Essential Secrets of Meditation T15, No. 613  
EĀ = Ekottarāgama T2 No. 125  
Fmj = Zhuo-chan-san-mei-fa-men-jing T15 No. 614.  
Fvj = Chan-xing-fa-xiang-jing T15 No. 605.  
GPWT = Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise, T, 1509  
Gs = Gradual Sayings  
HKSC = Xu-kao-seng-chuan, T, 2510.  
Ilspm = The Importance of the Law of Sitting in the Practice of Meditation (修習止觀坐禪法要)  
Khai-yuan-lu = Zhi-sheng, Khai-yuan-shih-kian-lu, T55, No. 2154  
KIK. = Kokuyaku Issaikyō (figures: number of volume & part)  
Ks. = Kindred Sayings  
KSC. = Kao-seng-chuan, T, 2509  
M. = Majjhimanikāya (figures: number of sutta)  
Milp = Milindapañha  
Mtu = Mahāvastu  
MVS = Abhidharma-mahāvibhāsā-śāstra T27  
Ny. = Abhidharma-Nyāyānusāra T29, No. 1562  
PTS = Pali Text Society  
RMS = Records as the Mirror of the (Dhyāna) Schools (宗鏡錄), T48, No. 2016  
SĀ = Samyuktāgama (figures: number of sūtra)  
S = Samyuttanikāya (figures: numbers of Samyutta and Sutta)  
Sui-lu(1) = Fa-jing, Sui-zhong-jing-mu-lu, T55, No. 2146  
Sui-lu(2) = Yian-Zhong, Sui-Zhong-jing-mu-lu, T55, No. 2147  
T = Taisho Edn of the Chinese Tripitaka Ed. Takakusu J. et. al. (figures: number of volume)  
Ta-than-lu = Tao-xuan, Ta-than-nei-tien-lu, T55, No. 2149  
Ta-ming-lu = Ta-ming-san-tsan-shan-kiao-mu-lu  
TbUdv(E) = English tr. of the Tibetan version of the Udānavarga  
Tdj = Xiu-xing-tao-di-jing T15 No. 606.



Thu-ji = Ku-kin-i-kin-thu-ji, T55, No. 2151  
Udv (C1) = Chu Yao Jing. t4, No. 212  
Udv(C2) = Fa ji Yao Sung Jing. T4, No. 213  
Vim = Vimuttimagga  
Vin = Vinaya Pitaka  
Vis = Visuddhimagga (figures: numbers of chapter & paragraphing in “The Path of Purification”, tr. by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli publ. by the Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy)  
Yf = Si-wei-lue-yao-fa T15 N0. 617.  
Yjj = Chan-fa-yao-jie-jing T15 No. 616  
Yrf = Wu-men-chan-jing-yao-rong-fa T15 No. 619.  
Zen = R.H. Blyth, Zen and Zen Classics  
Zheng-yuan-lu = Yuan-zhao, Zheng-yuan-xin-ding-shi-jiao-mu-lu, T55, No. 2157